

SEC. 421. Such funds as may be necessary to carry out the orderly termination of the Office of Consumer Affairs shall be made available from funds appropriated to the Department of Health and Human Services for fiscal year 1998.

AMERICORPS STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT

SEC. 422. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the term "qualified student loan" with respect to national service education awards shall mean any loan made directly to a student and certified through an institution of higher education as necessary to assist the student in paying the cost of attendance, in addition to other meanings under section 148(b)(7) of the National and Community Service Act.

SENSE OF THE SENATE CONCERNING CATASTROPHIC NATURAL DISASTERS

SEC. 423. (a) FINDINGS.—The Senate finds that—

(1) catastrophic natural disasters are occurring with great frequency, a trend that is likely to continue for several decades according to prominent scientists;

(2) estimated damage to homes, buildings, and other structures from catastrophic natural disasters has totaled well over \$100,000,000,000 during the last decade, not including the indirect costs of the disasters such as lost productivity and economic decline;

(3) the lack of adequate planning for catastrophic natural disasters, coupled with inadequate private insurance, has led to increasing reliance on the Federal Government to provide disaster relief, including the appropriation of \$40,000,000,000 in supplemental funding since 1989;

(4) in the foreseeable future, a strong likelihood exists that the United States will experience a megacatastrophe, the impact of which would cause widespread economic disruption for homeowners and businesses and enormous cost to the Federal Government; and

(5) the Federal Government has failed to anticipate catastrophic natural disasters and take comprehensive action to reduce their impact.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that Congress should consider legislation that embodies the following principles:

(1) Persons who live in areas at risk of natural disaster should assume a practical level of personal responsibility for the risks through private insurance.

(2) The insurance industry, in partnership with the Federal Government and other private sector entities, should establish new mechanisms for the spreading of the risk of catastrophes that minimize the involvement and liability of the Federal Government.

(3) A partnership should be formed between the private sector and government at all levels to encourage better disaster preparation and respond quickly to the physical and financial impacts of catastrophic natural disasters.

SEC. 424. It is the sense of the Senate that Congress should appropriate for the Department of Veterans Affairs for discretionary activities in each of fiscal years 1999 through 2002 an amount equal to the amount required by the Department in such fiscal year for such activities.

SEC. 425. (a) Not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs shall hold one or more hearings to consider legislation which would add the following diseases at the end of section 1112(c)(2) of title 38, United States Code:

- (1) Lung cancer.
- (2) Bone cancer.
- (3) Skin cancer.
- (4) Colon cancer.
- (5) Kidney cancer.
- (6) Posterior subcapsular cataracts.
- (7) Non-malignant thyroid nodular disease.
- (8) Ovarian cancer.
- (9) Parathyroid adenoma.
- (10) Tumors of the brain and central nervous system.
- (11) Rectal cancer.

(b) Not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Congressional Budget Office shall provide to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Senate Appropriations Committee an estimate of the cost of the provision contained in subsection (a).

This Act may be cited as the "Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998".

NATIONAL GEOLOGIC MAPPING REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1997

Mr. COCHRAN. I ask unanimous consent that the Energy Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 709 and, further, that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 709) to reauthorize and amend the National Geologic Mapping Act of 1992, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read the third time, and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill appear at this point in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 709) was considered read the third time, and passed.

TAXPAYER BROWSING PROTECTION ACT

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 39, H.R. 1226.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will report.

A bill (H.R. 1226) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prevent the unauthorized inspection of tax returns or tax return information.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read the third time, and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill appear at this point in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 1226) was considered read the third time, and passed.

OAS-CIAV MISSION IN NICARAGUA

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate

proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 114, S. Con. Res. 40.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 40) expressing the sense of the Congress regarding OAS-CIAV Mission in Nicaragua.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the concurrent resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table and that any statements relating to the resolution appear at this point in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 40) was agreed to, as follows:

S. CON. RES. 40

Whereas the International Support and Verification Commission of the Organization of American States (in this resolution referred to as the "OAS-CIAV") was established in the August 7, 1989, Tela Accords by the presidents of the Central American countries and by the Secretaries General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States for the purpose of ending the Nicaraguan war and reintegrating members of the Nicaraguan Resistance into civil society;

Whereas the OAS-CIAV, originally comprised of 53 unarmed Latin Americans, successfully demobilized 22,500 members of the Nicaraguan Resistance and distributed food and humanitarian assistance to more than 119,000 repatriated Nicaraguans prior to July 1991;

Whereas the OAS-CIAV provided seeds, starter plants, and fertilizer to more than 17,000 families of demobilized combatants;

Whereas the OAS-CIAV assisted former Nicaraguan Resistance members in the construction of nearly 3,000 homes for impoverished families, 45 schools, 50 health clinics, and 25 community multi-purpose centers, as well as the development of microenterprises;

Whereas the OAS-CIAV assisted rural communities with the reparation of roads, development of potable water sources, veterinary and preventative medical training, raising basic crops, cattle ranching, and reforestation;

Whereas the OAS-CIAV, together with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), trained local paramedics to staff 22 health posts in the Atlantic and Pacific regions of Nicaragua and provided medical supplies to treat mothers, young children, and cholera patients, among others, in a five-month program that benefited nearly 50,000 Nicaraguans;

Whereas the OAS-CIAV, with 15 members under a new mandate effective June 9, 1993, has investigated and documented more than 1,800 human rights violations, including 653 murders and has presented these cases to Nicaraguan authorities, following and advocating justice in each case;

Whereas the OAS-CIAV has demobilized 20,745 rearmed contras and Sandinistas, as well as apolitical criminal groups, and recently brokered and mediated the successful